Trade in America 76.

THE

SPEECH

OF

GENERAL CONWAY,

&c. &c. &c.

PRICE ONE SHILLING and SIX-PENCE.

May 1780

THE

SPEECH

OF

GENERAL CONWAY,

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

FOR

SAINT EDMONDSBURY,

ON MOVING IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

(ON THE 5th OF MAY, 1780)

"That Leave be given to bring in a BILL for QUIETING the "TROUBLES NOW REIGNING in the BRITISH COLO-"NIES in AMERICA, and for enabling His MAJESTY to "appoint COMMISSIONERS, with full Powers to treat, and "conclude upon Terms of CONCILIATION with the said "COLONIES."

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M, DCC, LXXX.

SPEECH, &c.

Mr. SPEAKER,

I SOME time ago engaged myſelf to this Houſe, to bring before them a matter of great importance. But reflecting fully on the difficulties attending it, I almoſt repent of my raſhneſs, for they are not only the difficulties of the ſubject, or its importance, great enough to deterr a man of much ſuperior talents, but they are the difficulties of the times, the ſtate of men, and of things; of parties, and of opinions. I ſtand beſides in the unfortunate predicament of having a ſyſtem, which, differing from the leading ideas on both ſides of the Houſe, and having no protection but from my feeble powers, is in danger of being cruſhed and annihilated between the colliſion of

contending parties, or perhaps held in equal contempt by both.

However, Sir, I hope this once the Houſe will grant me their indulgence, and will pardon my preſumption, if animated with an ardent and ſincere zeal, and the fulleſt internal conviction, I almoſt flatter myſelf I ſhall relate ſuch facts, and draw ſuch concluſions from them, as may make ſome impreſſion on their minds.

Gentlemen know that it is on the ſubject of the American war I mean to trouble them, and to offer to their judgment a plan of conciliation.

But before I enter into this, I beg leave to make ſome few obſervations on the general ſituation of this country, which I will not ſay is the moſt deſperate, (I hate the word) but undoubtedly the moſt dangerous it was ever in, ſince the exiſtence of the Britiſh monarchy. Depreſſed with debt; exhauſted by taxes; our reſources, and almoſt our ſpirit, failing; with little but our pride and paſſions left to ſupport

us; involved in a dangerous and unequal war with the united force of France and Spain, while a fatal rebellion is preying upon our vitals: Such is our general calamitous ſituation. But this is not all: we have not only many powerful enemies, but we have not one friend. 'Tis not France and Spain alone; all Europe ſeems armed, or arming againſt us. The great powers deride and deſpiſe; even the little ones peck at and inſult us. The Dantzickers; the towns of Lubeck and Hamburgh; even Holland, the *laſt lingering friend*, ſeems to have *bid farewel*. We are like the ſtricken deer, driven out of the herd, and may ſoon not have a name, or a being, among the powers of Europe. To ſuch a pitch have our faults and our follies, our ignorance and our preſumption, brought us. We have deſerved, and we have, I doubt, incurred the wrath of Heaven: and though we go on with annual mockeries of prayer and faſting, we ſhew in our conduct no ſign nor ſymptom of amendment; ſloth and indolence, and indifference, have taken the place of manly exertion and vigilance. But

ſuch are not the means of obtaining divine aſſiſtance.

Ubi ſocordiæ tete atque ignaviæ tradideris, nequicquam deos implores; irati infeſtique ſunt.

But, Sir, it is in this miſerable chaos, in this ſtate of darkneſs, almoſt under the ſhadow of death, that it becomes every man, who has a heart feeling for the diſgraces and diſtreſſes of his country, to ſee if from no quarter a ray of hope breaks through the gloom. And, if my zeal does not too far betray me, I think there is one which, if now ſeized and purſued, may lead us out of this labyrinth; may yet reſtore us to glory and happineſs.

The firſt ſtep to reformation is, repentance; and I would to God I ſaw in the minds of our governors, thoſe ſigns of repentance, that converſion which I flatter myſelf I ſee in the people. They are at laſt, I think, ſtarted up from that golden dream of conqueſt, which fallacy and falſehood had painted to their imagination.

The

The ſcales are fallen from their eyes, they ſee how they have been ſacrificed and deceived; and their ſongs of triumph are now turned into clamours and bitter lamentations. But, ſir, they are not yet the loud cries of rage and reſentment; they are the cool complaints of diſappointment and apprehenſion; of fears and juſt alarms for themſelves and their poſterity; they behold the fabrick of their great empire, as it were, crumbling, and diſſolving all around them; but inſtead of vengeance againſt the authors of their calamities, they mildly call for reformation.---'Tis not the fury of a ſtorm, but the calm murmur of a refluent tide.

And ſurely, if ever the voice of the people claimed attention, it is in a moment like the preſent; it ought to be heard, it muſt be heard; and, I may ſay, it will be heard; it has, hitherto, ſpoken almoſt in whiſpers; ſoon, if not regarded, it may ſpeak in thunder.

This nation, ſir, is ſick with many evils, ſome of them I have touched upon; and, I am ſorry to ſay, it is alſo blotted with many vices, and foul corruptions; but I do not mean to enter into them, they are beyond my ſtrength, and they are not the buſineſs of this day; and, indeed, "*ſufficient to the day is the evil thereof.*" For this day is ſet apart to the conſideration of the American war; an evil in itſelf ſo monſtrous, that we muſt ſoon conquer it, or periſh under it;

Hæret lateri læthalis arundo.

It is the fatal ſhaft ſticking in our ſide; piercing to our vitals, and draining almoſt the laſt drop of our blood.

In deliberating, therefore, upon the means of reſtoring peace with America; it ſeems to me almoſt a deliberation about our own being. "*Our life and death are both before us;*" and I can ſcarce help adding the other ſolemn words of Cato.

"This, in a moment, brings me to
"my end;
"But this aſſures me I ſhall never die."

The

The continuation of this diſtracted war is certain death to us; whereas, a happy and cordial reconciliation with America, upon fair and ſolid grounds, may fix the greatneſs of the Britiſh empire till time ſhall be no more.

But, ſir, it is a great work; it demands all your judgment to digeſt, and your utmoſt vigour and exertion to atchieve. Something muſt be undone, as well as done; you muſt renounce many favourite maxims conceived in the hour of happineſs, and in the pride and inſolence of your power; and trace back again thoſe erroneous ſteps that have brought you to the brink of this precipice.

I do not mean to go back with much retroſpect on the paſt, nor to dwell much on any invidious or diſputable matter; and ſhall only touch ſlightly on thoſe leading principles on which this war was begun, and has been purſued, as far as is neceſſary to lay the ſubject clearly before you. The avowed principle of this war, ſir, was the

taxation

taxation of America; a ſyſtem fooliſhly, I think, and fatally conceived, equally impolitic and unjuſt. I ſhall never forget that fatal night when this Houſe, in a thin Committee, and in a dark and evil hour, like a band of black conſpirators, reſolved to rob three millions of Britiſh ſubjects of their liberty and property; for a Reſolution was then propoſed and formed *to tax America*. I was one of the few who oppoſed that propoſition; and then, at that early period, warned my countrymen of the many dangers that attended it; it is fifteen years ſince; but I now feel inexpreſſible ſatisfaction in that remembrance; and ſhall carry it, with pride and conſolation, to my grave.

I will not fatigue and wound your minds by a recapitulation of all the wretched ſcenes that have ſucceeded; the faults and follies we have committed; the contradictions, tergiverſations, deceptions, and all the train of diſgraces that have followed. The miſerable ſyſtem of Taxation was maintained as long as it could be maintained; nay,

nay, I may ſay, even longer; it ſhewed itſelf through fifty diſguiſes: firſt, in the ſhape of Regulation, then the honour of Parliament, then under the fallacious garb of a conciliatory propoſition: though it had been, in the moſt ſolemn and expreſs words, renounced by Lord Hillſborough's letter, yet ſtill it was maintained; and, when the ſubſtance was given up, profeſſedly, we conteſted for the ſhadow. All idea of any other tax but the Tea-duty was diſclaimed; but ſtill the Tea-duty was maintained; we quarrelled for the Tea-duty, fought for the Tea-duty, for the Tea-duty was this deſtructive war with France, Spain and America, poſitively made. Could ſoleciſm, infatuation, and inſanity, go farther? the Poet's accuſation of our weak firſt Parent, who

"*For an apple damn'd mankind,*"

is ſcarce an exaggerated expreſſion for ſuch folly.

It was ſaid, however, if this was a folly, it was not the folly of the miniſters only, it was the folly of the nation; which I know was, in part, true; but I know too, why it was true: becauſe the people were never rightly informed; becauſe a ſcene of conſtant deception was practiſed to inflame and miſguide them; becauſe, "a flood of "Treaſure, from American Taxation, was "to pay their debts, and eaſe all their "burthens; becauſe the Americans were "natural enemies to this country; Aliens, "or Rebels and Independants, by prin-"ciple; they were Cowards, beſides; and "a few thouſand men could, at any time, "ſubdue, and drive them off the Conti-"nent."---Upon ſuch repreſentations did the people form their opinions; upon the ſame, were built all thoſe lofty and magnificent principles upon which this war has been purſued; one would have the *Americans at our feet,* another would *reduce them to unconditional ſubmiſſion,* a third *would conquer them by ſtarvation,* a fourth, *by fire and depopulation:* Theſe things were not in the mouths of the ignorant alone; men of the

firſt

firſt weight, the firſt dignity, adopted them. All the Law and Learning of the Kingdom were employed to inforce them.

" *The Rubicon is paſt, kill them, or they kill you.*"

Such was the ſentence of the greateſt Judge of the land, and the firſt Oracle of Government.

With ſuch Authorities to lead, and ſuch Viſions to inflame them, 'tis no wonder the people took fire.---This furious ſpirit thus kindled by the heads of the Party, *In Patriam, populumque fluxit.* The Rage did, I confeſs, ſeize almoſt all ranks and orders of men; but for being more general, it was not more juſt. It became, indeed, the ſin of the people; but was, as I have ſhewn, the ſin of Government firſt.

" *Peccavit, et peccare fecit Iſrael.*"

Even the more ſacred function, and the higheſt orders of it, caught the Frenzy

too, and joined with the deluded people in this *dance of death.*

Neither charity nor juſtice, nor decorum, in my opinion, were heard; all was paſſion.

Three millions of our fellow ſubjects were condemned unheard. Sir, it was a caſe of blood! By the ordinary rules of the Conſtitution, thoſe pious ſages ought not to have had a part in it. I tread upon tender ground: I know the reſpect due to thoſe right reverend perſons, and for their piety and learning, in their true ſacred character, nobody has more: but a little too much zeal for the meaſures of the day; too much complaiſance for the authors of thoſe meaſures, too often miſlead them. In their dioceſes I revere them; I would treat them every where with reſpect; but politicks are not their trade, and don't do them honour: they are a ſhining body of the nation undoubtedly, and have done the higheſt honour to it on many occaſions; but in the

preſent times, I doubt, are a faulty, if not a rotten part of the Conſtitution.

I beg pardon for this little digreſſion, Sir: I ſaid the Americans were condemned unheard. They were truly ſo, and in that I think were concentred and united all the ſum and eſſence of our cruelty, tyranny, and injuſtice: ſuch a conduct ſurpaſſes even the rancour of ſavages, and is unknown in the annals of civilized nations. In vain did they ſupplicate, proteſt, beſeech, beg to be heard. You anſwered, "*They were* "*rebels*, and deſerved no attention; that "they had formed a determined ſyſtem of "independence, and renounced the autho- "rity of the Britiſh legiſlature." They denied the charge, and appealed, in the moſt ſolemn manner, to God and their country, for the truth of their aſſertions. 'Twas in vain; you determined they were Rebels. You choſe they ſhould be Rebels, that you might ſubdue and trample upon upon them as ſuch.

I do

I do not talk from hearſay, or imagination, but from the moſt publick and authentick teſtimonials: their numerous memorials and petitions to parliament, and the throne; and their letters to the people of Great Britain and Ireland. Theſe, Sir, were the genuine language of America; formally, properly, and conſtitutionally before you. In denying the charge of rebellion, *they diſproved* it: the renouncing the authority of Parliament, and applying to its power, was a contradiction in terms.

But ſuch was the dominion of paſſion at that time, that contradictions paſſed for demonſtrations, and the humbleſt ſupplications for declarations of war and defiance.

But, Sir, to ſhew I do neither miſtake nor mean to miſguide, I beg leave to lay their declarations before you in their own words; for it is eſſential to know what was, and I believe, as far as human feelings allow,

low, is ſtill the diſpoſition of the Americans.

In the petition of the Congreſs to the King, in 1775, they ſay, by removing the grievance above-mentioned,* "*the harmo-*
"*ny between Great Britain and their Co-*
"*lonies*, ſo neceſſary to the happineſs of
"both, and *ſo ardently deſired by the latter*,
"will be immediately reſtored.---In the
"magnanimity and juſtice of your Majeſ-
"ty and *Parliament* we confide for a redreſs
"of *our other grievances*, &c.

"For appealing to that Being who
"ſearches thoroughly the hearts of his crea-
"tures, we ſolemnly profeſs that our
"Councils have been influenced by no other
"motive than a dread of impending de-
"ſtruction. Permit us, therefore, moſt
"Gracious Sovereign, in the name of all
"your faithful people of America, with
"the utmoſt humility to implore you, for
"the honour of Almighty God, whoſe

* Taxation.

"*pure*

" *pure religion our enemies are undermining,*
" for your glory, which can only be ad-
" vanced by rendering your people happy,
" &c. &c.

" That your royal authority and inter-
" poſition may be uſed for our relief, and
" that a gracious anſwer may be given to
" this petition."

This petition was allowed to be moderate and reaſonable, and was laid before Parliament by Lord Dartmouth, with many other papers that year.

The New-York Memorial to the Houſe of Lords, of the 25th of March, 1775, ſays, " We ſhall always chearfully ſubmit
" to the conſtitutional exerciſe of the ſu-
" preme regulating power lodged in King,
" Lords, and Commons of Great Britain;
" and to all acts calculated for the general
" weal of the empire, and the due regula-
" tion of the trade and commerce thereof.

" We

" We conceive this power includes a
" right to lay duties upon all articles im-
" ported directly into the Colonies, from
" any foreign country, &c. &c. But that
" it is the undoubted right of our Conſti-
" tution, that no taxes be impoſed on them,
" but with their conſent, given perſonally,
" or by their lawful repreſentatives.

" We therefore hope your Lordſhips
" *will aid and concur in redreſſing* our griev-
" ances, removing all cauſes of diſſention
" with Great Britain, and eſtabliſhing our
" rights and privileges upon a ſolid and
" laſting foundation."

The repreſentation and remonſtrance of the ſame Colony to the Houſe of Commons. After ſtating their grievances, they ſay,

" Nor in claiming theſe eſſential rights
" do we *harbour the moſt diſtant idea of in-*
" *dependence*, on the parent kingdom. We
" *acknowledge the Parliament of Great Bri-*
" *tain neceſſarily entitled to a ſupreme direc-*

" *tion and Government over the whole Em-*
" *pire.*

" We claim *but a reſtoration of that which*
" *we enjoyed before the cloſe of the laſt war.*
" *We deſire no more than a continuation of*
" *that ancient Government, to which we are*
" *entitled by the principles of the Britiſh Con-*
" *ſtitution.*

" Attached by every tye of intereſt and
" regard to the Britiſh nation, &c. &c. we
" harbour not an idea of diminiſhing the
" power and grandeur of the mother coun-
" try, or leſſening the luſtre and dignity of
" Parliament. Our object is the happineſs
" which can only ariſe from the union of
" both countries.

" Fully truſting that this Honourable
" Houſe will liſten *with attention to our*
" *complaints*, and redreſs our grievances,
" &c."

In the Addreſs to the People of England, the 8th of July, 1775, they ſay,

" They

" They are accuſed of aiming at Inde-
" pendency, which they deny, as a charge,
" *ſupported only by the allegations of our Mi-*
" *niſtry.*

" Abuſed, inſulted, and contemned,
" what ſteps have we purſued to obtain re-
" dreſs? We have carried our *dutiful Pe-*
" *titions to the Throne.* We have applied
" to your juſtice for relief."

" It has been ſaid, we refuſe to ſubmit to
" the reſtrictions on our commerce. From
" whence is this inference drawn? Not from
" our words, we having repeatedly declared
" the contrary."

They declare " their readineſs to ſubmit
" to the acts of Trade and Navigation, paſt
" before the year 1763.

" They are ready to ſubmit to any far-
" ther acts for the regulation of their ex-
" ternal commerce---excluding every idea
" of taxation, internal or external, for

" *raiſing a revenue on the ſubjects of Ame-*
" *rica without their conſent.*"

They ſay, " they had again preſented an
" humble Petition to his Majeſty; and to
" remove every imputation of obſtinacy,
" have requeſted his Majeſty *to direct ſome*
" *mode, by which* the united applications of
" his faithful Coloniſts may be improved
" into an *happy and permanent reconcili-*
" *ation.*"

That was the Petition brought over by Mr. *Penn*, dated the 4th of *September*, 1775.

In that they farther ſay, among many other expreſſions of loyalty and duty,

" Our breaſts retain too tender a regard
" for the kingdom, from which we derive
" our origin, to requeſt ſuch a conciliation
" as might be in any manner *inconſiſtent*
" *with her dignity, or her welfare.*"

When I reflect upon theſe things, and upon our conduct in conſequence, they ſeem more like a viſion of the night, than a reality, and the public tranſactions of a great, and formerly wiſe nation, in the face of day. I know how many falſe and idle pretences were made; and how we ſhamefully cavilled at expreſſions, when matters were in queſtion upon which the very fate of this country depended.---They denied our right to tax them, and they denied nothing elſe; and they expected the regulation of their internal concerns by their own aſſemblies, agreeably to the ſpirit of their Charters, and to the common rights of a Free People. But becauſe they denied any thing, becauſe they refuſed to be ſlaves, you called them Rebels; a vain Idol of dignity, the creature of our pride and avarice, was ſet up: To this, our real dignity was ſacrificed (for Dignity cannot conſiſt with Tyranny and Injuſtice) to this, whole Hecatombs of Britiſh ſubjects were devoted, and the beſt blood of this country daily poured out. Fitter ſacrifices to the beaſtly Moloch

Moloch than to the Genius of this free nation.

This is not a Government for ſlaves in any part of its Dominions. Philip II. ſaid "*he had rather have no ſubjects, than be a* "*King of Hereticks*;" a Britiſh monarch ſhould ſay, "he had rather not be a King, "than be a King of ſlaves."

I beg pardon ſir; I fear I tire your patience, I have dwelt longer on this retroſpect of our conduct and ſituation than I intended; I hope the zeal which has inſenſibly carried me away, on a ſubject I have ſo much at heart, will be excuſable.

I now proceed to explain to the Houſe, the plan which I propoſe to offer, and the foundation upon which I have formed ſome hopes of its ſucceſs, ſhould it meet with your approbation.

Firſt, ſir, it is a Parliamentary plan. I propoſe to ſpeak to the Americans by the voice of Parliament; and to lay down grounds

grounds and terms of Conciliation previouſly ſanctified and ratified by Parliament.

Several plans of reconciliation have, at different times, been propoſed in Parliament; but all, ſucceſſively, rejected; I ſhould indeed except one, that of the noble Lord below me, very improperly called *a Plan of Conciliation*; for it was, in my humble opinion, the very Antipodes of Conciliation. It was a plan of virtual and effectual Taxation, and conſequently totally inadmiſſible by the Americans; it was a plan for the noble Lord's favourite *dignity*; and conſequently not a plan to gain the hearts of our Coloniſts;

" *Non bene conveniunt et in unâ ſede mo-*
" *rantur,*
" *Majeſtas et Amor.*"

Such dignity did not conſiſt with the love of that free people; you could not both take their money, and win their hearts; but it was imagined they might be captivated

vated with words, and think the ſound of freedom, as good as freedom; indeed, to thoſe to whom Liberty is but a name, it may be ſo; *they* judged by more ſtubborn principles, they held their own property faſt; but *that* ſincerely and ſolidly ſecured, during all the firſt periods of the conteſt, their hearts were yours. This I ſhall for ever maintain as a demonſtration. The ſcene is undoubtedly changed, and we have now the difficult taſk before us of retrieving an almoſt loſt game; by ſo much the more difficult, as to regain the love of a much injured friend, is harder than to win the affections of a ſtranger.

But, I ſaid this was a Parliamentary plan; it was by Parliament I propoſed this great work of peace ſhould be done; by Parliament alone I think it can be done; and ſurely, ſir, it is among the capital ſoleciſms of the times, that while the Honour of Parliament was oſtenſibly, indeed oſtentatiouſly, held out as the cauſe of quarrel, all final ſettlement was conſtantly taken out of the hands of Parliament, and made

made the buſineſs of the Crown and its Miniſters;---but, ſir, for a Parliamentary ſettlement, every reaſon ſeems to me to militate. The voice of Parliament, ſpeaking by an Act of Parliament, is the voice of the nation; that voice is ſteady, ſolid, permanent, not ſhifting and ſhuffling, like the voice of Miniſters. The voice of Parliament will be truſted by the Americans; the words of Miniſters, it is plain, cannot; it is, beſides, more for our dignity, that Parliament ſhould declare, and fix the general grounds upon which ſhe means to accept of the friendſhip of the Colonies, or grant them hers; than that we ſhould wait to hear them from thence. But above all the reſt, is the great expediency, almoſt neceſſity, of a *ſudden concluſion*: our ſituation will not bear procraſtination, the delay of a ſingle year, nay a ſingle month, may be fatal to us, not from the miſerable waſte and decay of our ſtrength alone, but, as in the preſent critical diſpoſition of things new events may happen, or new enemies ariſe to make that ſituation ſtill more deſperate. This plan, ſir, is framed

for the ſpeedieſt concluſion; for it holds out terms which the Americans at large, or any particular province, may accept when they will, and be immediately *at his Majeſty's peace*; not a day, ſcarce an hour, need be loſt in that deſirable work; no previous negociation is needful; to ſignify their conſent is ſufficient.

As to the particular terms, I have followed, pretty nearly, Lord Chatham's plan, but with ſome variations in the matter and manner; and it is a ſubject of pride to me, that I tread, though at an humble diſtance, in the ſteps of that great man, and true friend to his country.

I mean by it to remove all their juſt complaints, and to grant them all their juſt demands; to make their own petitions, in general, the ground of our conceſſions; to ſecure them all their rights, their liberty and their property, not grudgingly, but fully and freely; not ſlightly, nor precariouſly, but irrevocably; not dependent upon the caprice of any Miniſter, but

but bound by the faith of the Britiſh Parliament.

It is a ſtandard to which they may at any time repair; an aſylum and bulwark to which they may reſort; and a boon and grace given in perpetuity, and which it is not even left to their own failings or weakneſs to forfeit.

Such is the principle and ſcope of the Bill I ſhall preſume to offer to the Houſe; and to ſave their time in hearing a more detailed deſcription of the particular terms, I will, with their permiſſion, though not agreeable, I believe, to ſtrict Parliamentary form, read, or beg the Clerk may be allowed to read, the Bill, as I have drawn it up. It may have, it has, I make no doubt, many defects; but I am not tenacious of particular words, or terms; take from it, add to it, mold it according to your wiſdom,---it is yours from this moment, tho' I confeſs my darling child: I offer it to your care, but let me recommend it to your indulgence.

" *To you, Sirs, and your honours, Be-*
" *queath it.*"

Form it, faſhion it, as you pleaſe; but do not cut the babe in twain; leave it that vital principle; that ſpirit which alone can make it an honour to its parent, or an advantage to the publick.

There remains now but one conſideration more, though that a moſt important one; namely, what hopes we have any reaſonable ground to form of its ſucceſs: And here, Sir, I know the many difficulties the ſubject labours under, and how many adverſe opinions I have to ſtruggle with: ſome are for no terms, no offers at all: ſome will think them too large: ſome are for withdrawing the troops, and ſome for giving abſolute independence. I know beſides the difficulty of obtaining any peace in our preſent ſituation; but I beg the Houſe to recollect that if the difficulty is great, the prize is ineſtimable.

As to withdrawing the troops, or granting independence, I ſhall ſay little. The former

former has the air of a poor and cowardly yielding, leaving them all their force uncontrolled, and their league with France and Spain entire. The latter I think a dreadful alternative, for ſhould the Thirteen Colonies be ſevered from us, we may ſtill, perhaps, exiſt as a people, never as a great people. In the dying words of Lord Chatham, "*it is a total diſmemberment of* the "Britiſh Empire; that empire which his "Majeſty received entire from his progeni-"tors, and which was guaranteed to the "heirs of the Princeſs Sophia." "The "Prince of Wales (he ſaid) might demand "his inheritance."

In ſhort, Sir, it is a ſtep I think little ſhort of deſpair ſhould drive us to, and nothing without an abſolute renunciation of their league with the Houſe of Bourbon.

As to the other, *of offering no conditions at all*, whoever thinks this is a wound *enſe recidendum*, to be cured by the ſword alone, errs fatally in my opinion; we have tried that

that experiment too long, and there is neither common ſenſe nor humanity in it.

But, Sir, I ſay *the ſword alone*, I never denied the uſe of the ſword ſince the war began; I never refuſed any aid to the full employment of it. On the contrary, I have urged, and do now, the employment of it with more activity and vigour.

There is no medium in war, and there is neither honour nor humanity in a lingering one. I would not keep one ſuperfluous man at home, nor delay a moment reinforcing your armies there to the utmoſt; ten thouſand men at leaſt ſhould immediately reinforce Sir Henry Clinton. I don't know what ſo many troops are now doing at home, no way wanting to your defence. I would not loſe a moment in ſending them.

What I deſire is, that the alternative may be fully and fairly before them: let the picture of the famous artiſt be actually and conſtantly preſented to their view; on the one ſide, the *horrors of war*; on the other,

the

the certain bleſſings of peace. Let the golden Heſperian fruit be placed, not only within their ſight, but within their reach. For, Sir, they cannot taſte of it but we muſt partake. As to the probability of ſucceſs, I am not too ſanguine. I ſaid, I ſaw a *ray of hope*; I think I do: but if I could not prove a great probability, it ſhould ſuffice (to ſhew the expediency of this meaſure) that *none is more probable*; that it is ſafe and honourable, the terms being of your own dictating, and that the experiment, which I have often urged, has never been tried. Great terms, indeed, were offered by his Majeſty's Commiſſioners, but they were not ſpecifically authenticated by Parliament. I think the Americans wanted faith in them, and they wanted ſubſequent ratification.

Sir, I do not ſay the Americans will accept theſe conditions. I am not ſo preſumptuous; yet I think there are many reaſons why they may accept them. I deſcribed, I think, truly, the wretched ſituation of this country. But, Sir, the Americans *are not upon a bed of roſes.*

If we have difficulties, ſo have they; if we have diſtreſſes, they are not exempt from them. I don't pretend to meaſure our mutual diſaſters, nor to determine which muſt ſink and expire firſt. I believe their perſonal diſtreſſes are much greater than ours, and their reſources much leſs; but they have great and potent allies, who ſupport them, and we have none.---But to what degree, and in what manner thoſe allies will continue to ſupport them, it ſeems eſſential to know. Will their *great and good ally*, the King of France, aſſiſt their credit, and pay their debts? I hear they already owe three hundred million of dollars; that they have very little money, and their paper currency exceſſively diſcredited.---By a late order of Congreſs, forty dollars currency are to be paid for one ſilver dollar.

The quotas now demanded from the different States are very great; their troops are ill paid, ill fed, and ill cloathed; and from hence a great difficulty in keeping them together. I have been told the men in Waſhington's army, in the Jerſeys, were laſt winter

ter ſome days reduced to live on half a pint of peas, and many had not ſhoes to their feet.

If theſe things are ſo, which I am not reſponſible for, but have ſome ground to believe, their *good and great ally ſeems* rather ſlow in ſupplying them. And this protection *of their liberties* does not, I believe, prevent much arbitary proceeding and tyranny in their rulers. Should ſuch diſtreſſes therefore continue and increaſe; ſhould their demands on France be refuſed, who knows but they too may *wake from their golden dream*, like ourſelves, and ſee in this *Protector of Liberties*, the deſigning conqueror, and the perfidious ally?

I underſtand, indeed, that the French are now preparing to ſend them a corps of troops: But I believe that is not the mode of ſupply they have moſt wiſhed for; ſtores, proviſions, neceſſaries, and above all, money, have been the conſtant objects of their demands hitherto. That of ſending troops has long been a meaſure of great

doubt and deliberation. I am not ſure the Americans do not think, that *when they aſk for bread it is giving them a* SERPENT: I know it is the opinion of ſome French, and many more Americans. I do not ſpeak at random; I have heard and ſeen opinions of great weight on that head: One I will name to you, Monſieur du Portail, a man of rank and character; and as they are very ſtrong and very appoſite, I will quote to you ſome lines out of as ſenſible a letter as I ever read; it is a letter from that gentleman to Monſieur de St. Germain, at that time Miniſter of the War department in France, written above an year ago. His words are:

" It may be aſked, whether it would " not be better to ſend a body of twelve or " fifteen thouſand men hither, *Ce ſeroit le " vrai moyen de tout gâter*. That would be " the true way to ſpoil all. Theſe people " here, though at war with the Engliſh, " hate the French much more than the " Engliſh; and notwithſtanding all that " France has done, or might do for them, " they would prefer a reconciliation with

" their

" their ancient brethren.---This (ſays he)
" we prove every day; and ſhould they for
" a moment conſent to French troops com-
" ing among them, their natural antipathy
" would ſoon diſcloſe itſelf, and would
" produce the moſt fatal quarrels."

And, ſpeaking afterwards of the idea of putting the French in poſſeſſion of Canada, he adds:

" The neighbourhood of the French is
" ſufficient to give them a diſlike to their
" liberty, becauſe they would not expect
" to keep it long: Dependence for depend-
" ence, they prefer that of England."

He makes many other remarks on the ſtate and diſpoſition of America, very well worth attention, and much confirming ſome propoſitions I have already thrown out. He ſays,

" They want *ſtores and neceſſaries of many*
" *kinds, cloth, linen, leather, cordage, ſalt,*
" *ſugar, brandy,* &c. And that theſe things

" were of the more conſequence, becauſe " theſe people before the war, though not " living in actual luxury, had all the con- " veniences of life in great abundance; " loved their eaſe and their indolence; " their pipe of tobacco, and their tea. " That they were heartily grieved to be- " come ſoldiers all of a ſudden, and to be " plunged into the rigours and hardſhips of " war, which they deteſted.

" This may ſeem (ſays he) a ſtrange lan- " guage; but ſuch is really the turn of this " people; they act with no energy, vigour, " nor paſſion in the cauſe they have eſpouſed, " and continue in it only becauſe they have " been once ſet a-going in it. *Il y' a cent* " *foit plus d' enthouſiaſme pour cette re-* " *volution cy dans un caffé de Paris, que* " *dans toutes les Colonies Unies.*

" There is a hundred times more enthu- " ſiaſm for this revolution in a coffee-houſe " at Paris, than in all the United Colo- " nies."

Such

Such, Sir, are the genuine reflections of this gentleman: I do not aſſert the infallibility of Monſieur du Portail; I do not ſwear by Monſieur du Portail; but I think he writes like a man of ſenſe; he was then converſant with the Americans; he had an high rank in their army, and he ſeems by his ſtile to have been confidentially employed to ſtudy, and report to the French Miniſter the ſtate of things in that country.

I ſhould add too, that after all theſe obſervations, he urges ſtrenuouſly the ſupport of the American war in a proper way; and *that*, "becauſe he thinks the independence "of America would *annihilate the Marine* "*of Great Britain*, and throw its com-"merce into the hands of France."

To ſome it may ſeem ſtrange, Sir, that I, profeſſedly a favourer of the Americans, and a determined enemy to this war, ſhould in any degree adopt ſuch language, ſhould expreſs ſuch averſion to the Independence of America, and with a plan of conciliation in my hand, (and God knows at my heart)

heart) ſhould yet urge the increaſe of our army there, and the more ſpirited and vigorous proſecution of hoſtilities.

Firſt then, let me ſay, that it is becauſe I hate the war that I am for carrying it on with vigour. If I wiſhed to prolong the war, I ſhould be for carrying it on ignorantly and flimſily.

And I deſire it may be remembered, that although to America perſecuted by our cruelty, and trampled on by our pride; to America, goaded and forced into rebellion, I was an ardent friend, yet to America irrevocably, as her Congreſs aſſerts, leagued with France and Spain, our natural enemies, againſt us, I have long ago declared, if I am a friend to Great Britain, I muſt be an enemy.

If, therefore, they are determined to be French, and not Britiſh Colonies; if they will have unconditional ſubmiſſion from us, bad as our ſituation may be, I will not think it deſperate.

Deſpair

Deſpair is a mean and cowardly vice; deſtruction for deſtruction, I would fall manfully at leaſt, and as our great deliverer King William ſaid, "*Die in the laſt* "*ditch.*" But, Sir, you have a vaſt army in America; I believe the eſtabliſhment is above ſeventy thouſand men, though we have fought our principle battles with 10, or at moſt 15,000; whereas could we have an army of 30,000 aſſembled, I am perſuaded the Americans never could have drawn, or kept together, one to face them; we have beſides the great advantage of powerful detachments, by means of our navy, for ſmall ones will always be both cruel and ineffectual.

Yet, Sir, I would not have you rely on the war: I would only make it ſubſervient to the great work of peace: if I knew a poſſible way of making peace without it, I would abandon it.

It is, however, as I have ſaid, but an alternative; it cannot, I think, be more fairly or honourably offered, and till it has been

been diſproved by trial, I cannot but have an hope of its ſucceſs. For this plan, at the ſame time that it offers them our friendſhip, proves our ſincerity, and it has this peculiar advantage, that it will be always before their eyes, in all diſpoſitions, under all circumſtances: other offers may be made on either ſide at untoward times, in moments of irritation or partial advantage, and may ſhift and vary with the moment. This will be out of the hands of Miniſters, and out of the reach of caprice; and however rooted the Congreſs may be in their plan of Independence and French connexion, I cannot but think there is in many of the people a diſlike to that connexion, and in many more a cordial affection towards their Parent State, not yet obliterated by our uſage.

There are beſides, if I am rightly informed, diviſions of another kind among them, more particular and perſonal; diviſions of faction, enmity, and ambition; no body knows how far theſe, or the influence of weighty and able men, in the army or the

provinces, may lead. There are, beſides what I have before mentioned, the love of eaſe, the wearineſs of the war, and the preſſure of diſtreſſes.

It is from ſuch cauſes, and in ſuch ſituations, that the moſt ſudden and unexpected revolutions have been brought about; no leſs than five or ſix in Europe, and within little more than a century paſt. Two moſt remarkable in our own country, the reſtoration of monarchy under Charles the Second, and the happy revolution of 1688. Nor were thoſe of Portugal, Denmark, and now lately of Sweden leſs ſudden, or entire. In all theſe caſes the change was eaſy and inſtantaneous, almoſt like the ſcenes of a drama.

In all it was a flying from preſent evils, from the uneaſineſs and preſſure of the moment, and in ſeveral a change apparently to a ſtate of leſs conſtitutional liberty.

I have tired your patience; I have but one word to add, it is above all things to

deprecate delay and procraſtination; it is to beg that whatever you reſolve, for war or conciliation, may be immediately reſolved. The time is critical and precarious; the ſcene fickle and ſhifting; a moment gained may be your ſalvation; a moment loſt, your ruin. A defeat at ſea; a diſaſter in America; the acceſſion of new enemies, (not an impoſſible event) I doubt, may diſable you from making war or peace. Even while we are debating, important and precious moments are ſtealing away,

Dum loquimur fugerit invida
Ætas, carpe diem quam minimum credulo
poſtero.

I thank the Houſe for the indulgence they have ſhewn me, and I humbly move, Sir,

" That leave be given to bring in a Bill
" for quieting the troubles now reigning in
" the Britiſh Colonies in America, and for
" enabling his Majeſty to appoint Commiſ-
" ſioners, with full powers to treat, and
" conclude upon terms of conciliation with
" the ſaid Colonies."

APPENDIX.

A BILL

FOR

Quieting the Troubles now reigning in the BRITISH COLONIES *in* AMERICA, *and for enabling his Majeſty to appoint* COMMISSIONERS, *with full Powers to treat and conclude upon Terms of* CONCILIATION *with the ſaid Colonies.*

" WHEREAS a ruinous and unnatural war has for ſome years raged between Great Britain and the ſeveral Britiſh Colonies in America, deſtructive at once of that harmony and mutual affection which had ſo long made the happineſs and ſtrength of both countries, and thereby giving every advantage to the known enemies of the Britiſh empire in all its parts, the fixed union of which had, by their cordial and effectual efforts, raiſed the name of Britain to the higheſt pitch of human renown and felicity; and had, during the courſe of many glorious

" reigns, ſerved as a barrier to the liberties
" of Europe, and as the ſtrongeſt ſupport
" of the Proteſtant religion againſt the
" baneful ſchemes of Popery and Deſpo-
" tiſm.

" And whereas, in the heat of a conten-
" tion, haſtily begun, many pernicious
" maxims have been adopted, and many
" falſe and dangerous meaſures purſued on
" both ſides.

" Now, in order to heal the ſaid fatal
" diſſentions, and to ſtop the farther effu-
" ſion of fellow-ſubjects' blood,

" Be it hereby declared and enacted by
" the King's moſt excellent Majeſty, by
" and with the advice and conſent of the
" Lords, ſpiritual and temporal, &c.

" That immediately upon the concluſion
" of any treaty of conciliation between
" Great Britain and America, all thoſe
" rights, principles, and immunities, which
" were demanded by the ſeveral aſſociated
" Colonies in their Petitions and Memo-
" rials

" rials to the King, and to the two Houſes
" of Parliament, (and particularly in the
" Petition of the Congreſs to the King of
" the 8th of *July*, 1775, and in the Me-
" morial of the Colony of New-York to
" the Houſe of Lords of the 25th of
" *March*, 1775; and in the Repreſentation
" and Remonſtrance of the General Aſſem-
" bly of the ſaid Colony of New-York, to
" the Houſe of Commons of the ſame
" date,) be, and are hereby declared to be
" conceded, and confirmed on the part of
" Great Britain, to the ſeveral aſſociated
" Colonies, or to any one or more of them,
" who ſhall agree on terms of conciliation
" as aforeſaid, with any Commiſſioners ap-
" pointed, or to be appointed by his Ma-
" jeſty for that purpoſe.

" And that no doubt may remain of the
" ſincere and friendly intentions of Great
" Britain, and of her earneſt deſire to bring
" back the ancient affection of her chil-
" dren, and reſtore that beneficial inter-
" courſe which muſt ever be the true baſis
" of their grandeur and happineſs;

" Be it hereby declared and enacted by " the authority aforeſaid, that from the " day ſuch conciliation, or treaty, ſhall be " concluded, all or any of the 13 aſſociated " Colonies, ſo agreeing on terms of con- " ciliation as aforeſaid, ſhall be, and are " hereby declared to be at the peace of his " Majeſty, and reſtored to the uſual inter- " courſe of friendſhip and commerce. " And it is hereby farther declared and " enacted, That no tallage, tax, or other " charge whatever, ſhall from thenceforth " be raiſed on the freemen of America, " without their own conſent, by their re- " preſentatives duly convened in aſſembly " there.

" That the powers of the Admiralty, " and Vice-Admiralty Courts, be reſtrain'd " within their ancient limits, and the tri- " al by jury, in all civil caſes, where the " ſame may have been aboliſhed, reſtored.

" That no ſubject in America ſhall, in " *capital caſes*, be liable to be indicted and " tried for the ſame in any place out of the " province

" province where ſuch crime ſhall have
" been committed; nor be deprived of a
" trial by his Peers of the vicinage.

" That it ſhall not be lawful to ſend
" perſons indicted for murder in any Colo-
" ny of America, to another Colony, or to
" Great Britain, for trial.

" The Judges in the Law Courts in the
" Colonies, ſhall hold their offices and ſala-
" ries as *his* Majeſty's Judges in England.
" *Quam diu ſe bene geſſerint.*

" That the Colonies in America are juſt-
" ly entitled to all the privileges, franchi-
" ſes, and immunities, granted by their ſe-
" veral charters and conſtitutions; and that
" the ſaid charters or conſtitutions ought
" not to be invaded or reſumed, unleſs for
" miſuſes, or ſome legal ground of forfei-
" ture.

" And for the ſaid, and other good
" and beneficial purpoſes, it is hereby
" declared and enacted, that the following

" acts,

" acts, or ſo much of the ſame as have
" been repreſented to be found grievous
" to the ſubjects in the Colonies as afore-
" ſaid, namely, the acts of 4 Geo. III.
" ch. 15 and 34. 5 Geo. III. ch. 25.
" 6 Geo. III. ch. 52. 7 Geo. III. ch. 41
" and 46. 8 Geo. III. ch. 22. 12 Geo.
" III. ch. 24. 14 Geo. III. ch. 54.

" Be and are hereby repealed with re-
" ſpect to all or any of the ſaid Colonies,
" from the day they ſhall have reſpectively
" entered into and concluded terms of con-
" ciliation with Great Britain, or with any
" perſons authorized by his Majeſty for
" that purpoſe.

" The ſaid acts alſo to be ſuſpended, and
" remain, without effect, in like manner,
" ſhould any truce take place for a limited
" time between Great Britain, and all or
" any of the ſaid Colonies reſpectively,
" during the continuance of ſuch truce.

" And be it farther declared, that the
" act of 14 Geo. III. ch. 83. for regu-
" lating

" lating the government of the province
" of Quebec, ſhall be reconſidered, altered,
" or repealed.

" And that no future doubt or jealouſy
" may remain relative to the rights of the
" Colonies, and the power of their aſſem-
" blies, lawfully conſtituted, be it declared
" by the authority aforeſaid, that the ſaid
" Colonies, in their ſaid aſſemblies, ſhall,
" agreeably to their charters and conſtitu-
" tions, have full power and authority to
" regulate all matters for the peace and
" good order of their internal government;
" the Legiſlature of Great Britain reſerv-
" ing only to itſelf the power of ordering
" and enacting ſuch things as concern the
" maintenance of the ſaid charters and con-
" ſtitutions, the general weal of the em-
" pire, and the due regulation of the trade
" and commerce thereof, upon thoſe prin-
" ciples of equity and ſound policy, which
" ſhall, on full diſcuſſion and conſideration,
" be found moſt conducive to the general
" good.

" And that nothing may obſtruct or re-
" tard the great work of peace, his Ma-
" jeſty is hereby authorized to appoint
" Commiſſioners, with full powers to
" treat and conclude, either peace or truce,
" with all or any of the ſaid Colonies,
" upon ſuch other, or farther terms of
" conciliation, as to his Majeſty, in his
" wiſdom, ſhall ſeem fit: always under-
" ſtood, and the ſame is hereby again de-
" clared and enacted; that all the ſeveral
" privileges, immunities, and advantages
" hereby granted to all, or any of the ſaid
" Colonies as above-mentioned, do ſerve
" as the baſis of ſuch treaty of conciliation,
" and are hereby ſanctified and guarantied
" under the faith of Parliament, as neceſ-
" ſary parts of the ſame.

" And farther, be it declared and en-
" acted by the authority aforeſaid, that it
" ſhall and may be lawful for his Majeſty
" to empower Commiſſioners to grant
" free pardon to any perſon, or any number
" or deſcription of perſons, or his full and
" general pardon to the inhabitants of all,

" or any of the ſaid Colonies reſpectively,
" for all acts of hoſtility, and for all things
" done or committed during the preſent
" troubles, and previous to the ſigning or
" concluſion of any treaty of conciliation
" as aforeſaid; and the ſame ſhall be con-
" ſidered, and is hereby confirmed as an
" act of perpetual amneſty and oblivion of
" ſuch acts of hoſtility, and of all things
" ſo done and committed during the con-
" tinuance of the ſaid troubles."

THE END.

ERRATA.

Page 1, The ſentence, " I ſtand beſides in the unfortunate predica-
" ment of having a ſyſtem," &c. ſhould be read thus:—
" I ſtand beſides in the unfortunate predicament of having
" *adopted* a ſyſtem," &c.

—— 44, 3d line from the bottom, for principles, read *privileges*.

—— 47, 5th line from the end, for miſuſes, read *miſuſer*.